

REMARKS

By this Amendment, the specification and claims 1, 11, and 12 are amended. Claim 9 is canceled without prejudice to or disclaimer of the features recited therein. Thus, claims 1-8 and 10-15 are pending in this application. Claim 1 is amended to incorporate canceled claim 9. The specification and claims 11 and 12 are amended to remove a redundant phrase for clarity. No new matter is added. Reconsideration in view of at least the following remarks is respectfully requested.

The Office Action rejects claims 1, 7, 8 and 11 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over U.S. Patent No. 5,152,522 to Yamashita; rejects claims 4 and 6 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Yamashita; and rejects claims 1, 2, 3 and 5 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 3,428,308 to Bernard in view of Yamashita. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

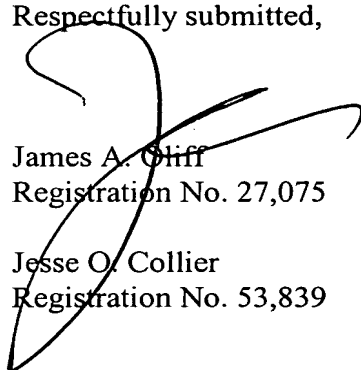
Applicants gratefully acknowledge the indication in the Office Action that the subject matter of claims 9, 10 and 12-15 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. By this Amendment, the subject matter of claim 9 is included in claim 1. Applicants respectfully assert that the basis for the rejections is moot.

For at least the foregoing reasons, claim 1 recites features not disclosed by Yamashita or Bernard, either alone or in combination. Further, the claims depending from claim 1 are allowable for at least the foregoing reason, as well as for the additional features they recite. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-8 and 10-15 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,


James A. Oliff
Registration No. 27,075

Jesse O. Collier
Registration No. 53,839

JAO:JOC/ldg

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OLIFF & BERRIDGE, PLC
P.O. Box 19928
Alexandria, Virginia 22320
Telephone: (703) 836-6400

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